

Lohia's Immanent Critique of Caste

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“The Prime Minister has a mind which essentially belongs to the West and Central Asia, a Magi mind, a mind of ‘the sacred book’, inimical not only to the evil, but also to the evil doer. The Indian mind is either inert or when active opposed the evil alone. The man who is an enemy of the evil doer has necessarily to befriend evil.” - R M Lohia¹ (1957)

This paper is divided into five sections. Section I explores Ram Manohar Lohia's method of immediacy and argues that for Lohia, internal tensions in history or mythologies are very important to develop a critical perspective. Section II tries to look at Lohia's contributions in the light of his predecessors like Gandhi and Ambedkar, two major influences on him in a variety of concerns. Section III examines Lohia's analysis of different aspects of caste and especially its moral order. In Section IV, it is proposed to discuss why Lohia focuses on non-historical resources (fables, myths) and their inner contradiction dealing with the caste system. In the last section, Lohia's analysis of three forms of opposition to caste is discussed.

I

Lohia's Method: The principle of Immediacy

It may be argued that Lohia's immanent criticism is outlined by his principle of immediacy. Recent commentators misunderstand Lohia's principle of immediacy. Yogendra Yadav's lengthy essay on Lohia's intellectual journey underestimates Lohia's method. Where he should notice Lohia's methodological protocols in his principle of immediacy, he argues that Lohia's principle is morally relevant against ‘vulgar presentism’ (excessively concerned with the present and indifferent to the future) but does not have any analytical significance. Commenting on Lohia's principle of immediacy, Yadav (2010: 94) argues, “Lohia did not formulate the analytical part of this insight (the principle of immediacy – my addition) as clearly as the normative principle”. Anand Kumar (2010) tries to argue for an intersectional understanding of caste but does not notice that Lohia offers an internal critique of caste and implies that Lohia transcends caste in order to offer his criticism of caste. His notion of intersectionality is transcendental based on external limits rather than immanent based on internal limits of the caste system. D L Seth comes very close to acknowledge internal tensions inside caste system and argues that ‘counter-cultural traditions’ (2002: 122) of the subaltern castes could be the basis of a new counter-hegemony. Seth argues that Lohia “does not develop sufficiently to give the symbolism a political content”. (Ibid.) But Seth fails to notice that Lohia develops new analytical protocols for a new socialist politics to begin with. Lohia intends to develop a new path for a new political programme. Akin to Buddhism, for Lohia, a path (method) may be more important than the destination (politics). Obsession with a remote destination may destroy our search of a right path which may be waiting for our immediate attention. Let us discuss this issue at length.

While responding to Yadav's position, Sasheej Hegde (2011: 72) however suggests that it is possible to argue that in Lohia's principle of immediacy, 'some aspects of this analytical part may be 'inflecting at once Lohia's ethics and politics'. What are these analytical aspects present in Lohia's principle of immediacy? Though Hedge does not explore methodological protocols present in Lohia's principle, he hints their presence in his elaborate response to Yadav's thesis. Hegde suggests that Lohia's principle of immediacy is about "the world imagined (and lived) from the perspective of will (as separate from reason).....One of the profound weaknesses of this politics on immediacy is that it has no account of the cognitive status of its own history, even though its basic superiority consists in its unique compatibility with prevailing and current historical conditions." (2011: 71). Hegde views Lohia's principle is an expression of a perspective of will (non-reason) rather than a perspective of reason. In my view, he thus reduces analytical import of an immanent criticism of history which is informed by a perspective of reason combined with a perspective of will (non-reason). Do we find a union of reason and will (non-reason) in Lohia's principle of immediacy? Is Lohia's principle of immediacy posited in the unitary sense (as claimed by Hedge, 2011: 70) and is thus devoid of a multiplicity of meanings? Let us now answer these questions.

What is Lohia's principle of immediacy? What is it opposed to or different from? How Lohia does discuss it? Lohia is critical of our obsession with 'vulgar presentism' (obsession with the present) on the one hand and 'vulgar futurism' (an excessive concern with a remote future) on the other and posits the principle of immediacy. In the modernist circles, there are two forms of reaction against vulgar presentism. Lohia distinguishes two forms of the test followed by modern intellectuals to promote their ideals of progress: the remote test (what may be called 'transcendental' principle) and the principle of immediacy (what may be called 'immanent principle').

Remote Test:

Thinkers following a remote test or transcendental principle argue that the modern civilisation is about constant 'progress' in production, democracy and even class struggle. A golden age is expected to come. The right wing intellectuals may focus on technological progress whereas the left-wing intellectuals may offer a remote justification of class struggle. Both may portray a golden age in future. Both have an over-riding faith in remote tests. Thus, Lohia (2011, Vol. 2: 183) argues that the modern world has given rise to dichotomies "between spirit and matter, individual and social, bread and culture and the like". As the future appears by suppressing the present, a dichotomy between the present and the future is posited in this remote method. The right wing intellectuals represent one side of the dichotomy (spirit/individual/culture/technology) and the left-wing intellectuals represent the exact opposite of it (matter/social/bread/humanity). Lohia argues that this is an unreal opposition. Lohia (ibid: 184) suggests, "These dichotomies have arisen because immediacy is flouted because history denies fable and fable deny history". True, Lohia here criticises a rationalist account of history popular in the Left and the Right that suppresses fables/fictions/myths. He seems to be giving up reason. But Lohia does not celebrate fables/myths. He subjects myths to a rational scrutiny and suggests that fables too have moral doctrines that impact history in a linear form or a cyclic form. By suppressing fables, a rationalist history presents the partial truth. A typical rationalist account of history is binary and is full of dichotomies. He is not giving up history for fables. He is interested in exploring a fruitful dialogue between history and fables, without sliding for one-sided analytical protocols popular with the philosophers of history (with a moment of flux in history) or moralists (with the moment of eternity in fables). If the moment of flux can be analysed by a

perspective of non-reason or will, the moment of eternity can be analysed from a perspective of reason. Though reason and will are necessary to analyse both the moments of eternity (fables) and flux (history). That is how Lohia breaks free from binary of reason and will by combining a critical perspective of history and fables. He is critical of their dichotomy, critical of their gaze over humanity and proposes a new synthesis. For fables are stories that never take place but moralists assume they are internally real. Historians denounce fables and rightly look for moments of flux/change and thus ignore what is “externally real” in fables. (Lohia, 2011, Vol.2: 185) Lohia concludes, “If a man must learn to live in history, he has an equal need to live outside it”. (ibid)

The Immediacy Test:

Lohia proposes, “We may, in fact, be heading for a golden age if we try to achieve that golden age in the immediate”. (Lohia, Vol 2: 186) The principle of immediacy connects the moment of flux (history) with the moment of eternity (fables), the moment of material force with a moment of subjective will, the moment of social with the moment of the individual. The principle of immediacy claims that for each single act, we need not look for transcendental criteria to justify its course of doing. It can be justified with immanent criteria or by a ‘here and now’ approach to production, governance, culture and class struggle. Lohia argues, “Compassion and revolution have to interweave and any preferential loyalty to one or the other would heap disaster on the spiritual as well as the material”. (Lohia, Vol 2: 186) Lohia clearly is unprepared to give up the reason for a will or vice versa. He discards the golden age of distant future and argues that such an ideal is harmful to left-wing movements. For they may do many ignoble acts to fulfil high ideals and think that their acts can be justified by the outcome of a remote future. If I may rephrase him, he implicitly suggests that a perspective of will focuses on compassion or spiritual realm whereas a perspective of reason concentrates on material changes in human life. A socialist ideal of progress must concentrate on a combined perspective of will and reason.

Lohia’s principle acquires an added analytical significance in socialist movement to establish classless and casteless society by a here-and-now approach rather than a remote approach. The orthodox notion of progress in socialist circles upholds a rosy future and forgets that subalterns want to gain ‘autonomy’ here and now rather than in distant future. Unless socialists identify with the subaltern search for autonomy/solidarity here and now and would want to identify their struggle with the subaltern search for autonomy, they will lose relevance here and now. Unless socialists identify with the principle of immediacy in production (the will to control production/profits in factory or agriculture field), in class struggle (democratic participation in pedagogy/action rather than dependence on leadership), in culture (intellectual formation among subalterns, approximation to other cultures of subalterns and so on), socialist movement cannot create the golden age it promises to the subaltern strata.

Lohia’s thesis is anticipated by Gramsci’s immanent criticism of socialist orthodoxies in Europe. Culturally, his thesis approximates that of Gramsci’s realist immanent critique (as opposed to speculative immanence). Gramsci suggests that a new research is necessary to know how Marxism proposes a new synthesis of three great currents of German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism. What are the principles from these currents affirmed, absorbed and continued by Marxism? Gramsci (1971: 400) argues, “And it seems to me that the unitary ‘moment’ of synthesis is to be identified in the new concept of

immanence, which has been translated from the speculative form, as put forward by classical German philosophy, into a historicist form with the aid of French politics and English classical economics.” Just as Lohia proposes the principle of immediacy to combine materialism and idealism, Gramsci offers an immanent method to offer a new synthesis of the two contrasting positions. Both of them are deeply worried about inheritance from traditions (history/fables). Gramsci (1971: 402) asks questions on his idea of synthesis: “Is it to be understood as a historical circle already completed.....once for all; or should it be rather understood as a historical process still in motion....?” Gramsci discards complacency in a socialist circle and adopts an open approach to synthesis. For him, a new synthesis is part of a historical process in motion. It can never be claimed as a historical circle completed once for all. Probably Lohia would have agreed with Gramsci’s realist immanent method.

As in Gramsci, Lohia’s analytical protocols also broaden the field of socialist politics. It is not merely concerned with the material transformation through the state power, it is equally concerned with spiritual change or intellectual transformation so that subaltern caste/classes cease to remain subalterns. It is not merely focused on capturing the state power but also the transformation of social power in caste/gender/class/ethnicity/language. Thus, analytically speaking, it is indeed a historic task of socialist movement to explore forms of immediacy in factory/land, class/caste struggle, governance and culture. It is possible for a new socialist movement to begin by identifying with these multiple forms of immediacy. Thus Lohia’s new analytical protocols are laid bare in his principle of immediacy required to renew a new socialist movement. His analysis is simultaneously political. His new methodology is at once a new political project. Far from positing a unitary notion of immediacy as claimed by Hegde, Lohia observes a plural notion of immediacy so that socialism could be constructed with multiple trajectories.

Does Lohia apply his own method to understand caste relation? Lohia does it very acutely. He offers a plural notion of immediacy to examine caste system and identifies caste in relation to gender, language, class and region. He locates its internal strength in providing forms of solidarity and security to members of a particular caste, though in a framework of segregation and argues that socialism must articulate similar forms of security and solidarity in non-discriminatory mode. Socialism must adopt and universalise solidarity currents practised by caste society, instead of pointing towards a distant future of collective progress. His application of the immanent principle to examine caste system is very clear. While this could be seen as part of his analysis of ‘history’, it may be useful to hint at this stage how he analyses fables of Ram-Vashistha-Sambhuka story on the one hand and Vashistha-Valmiki traditions on the other hand. He also pays attention to folk legends of fishermen or Dalit communities that reinforce their subordination and points to their inner contradictions in these beliefs. In a sense, he offers a subtle criticism of caste-based legends believed by lower castes. He deftly uses these stories to expose caste contradictions and points out a way-out. Let us examine these issues below.

II

Caste as domination or legitimation: Gandhi, Ambedkar and Lohia

Since caste is a power structure, it needs to be related to a theory of power. A theory of power is usually caught with a tension between two notions of power: power as a hierarchy of domination on the one hand and power as a system of legitimation on the other hand. The former focuses on a hierarchy of elites and subalterns, structural inequalities arising between them and strategies to dominate subaltern strata and so on. The latter focuses on why subalterns give consent to the domination of elites and its moral and legal paraphernalia.

These notions of power represent two different sides of power, sometimes pushing theorists to take sectarian positions. That is to say, theorists of power may merely echo the one or the other side of power, failing to notice that there are actually two sides of power in live tension or contradiction between each other. A comprehensive theory of power will have to engage with these two different tendencies of the power structure. Thus, a broad view of caste power may have to take into account the hierarchy of domination and structures of legitimation. It must break with a binary view that treats caste as domination or as legitimation process.

This paper primarily focuses on Lohia's accounts which deal with the moral order of caste. He focuses on the legitimising process of the caste system and enquires into why caste has survived as a social system. He throws some light on the resilient strength of caste system while pleading for the destruction of caste's exclusionary practices. But it would be a terrible mistake to examine Lohia's account of caste in isolation from that of Gandhi and Ambedkar. Moreover, in terms of genealogy, he should be evaluated as a succeeding thinker. If Lohia needs to be examined in relation to his immediate intellectual context, the antecedent tradition of criticism of caste must be placed beforehand so that we can assess his own contributions fruitfully. It may not be inaccurate to claim that the earlier thinkers such as Gandhi and Ambedkar describe caste as a hierarchy of domination (untouchability for Gandhi and graded inequalities for Ambedkar). Lohia assumes caste as a hierarchy and proceeds to focus on caste as a legitimising system: how does it draw the support of people and gain acceptability as a system? In my view, Lohia addresses a question not posed by Gandhi or Ambedkar.

Ambedkar and Lohia on Gandhi's view of Caste

There is one thing common to both Ambedkar and Lohia. Both are dissatisfied with Gandhi's doctrine of least resistance to caste order. Both argue for the rediscovery of Satyagrah against the caste system. If you recall, Gandhi was wary of Satyagrah against caste inequalities, notwithstanding his opposition to the British Raj on the grounds of Satyagraha. Gandhi does not think it would be prudent to place Satyagrah against caste order during the British Raj or even after India's Independence. Rather, on the caste issues, he proposes the doctrine of least resistance as a matter of principle rather than a time-dependent strategy. Gandhi thinks that caste is an unequal structure between the touchable castes and the untouchable castes.

He argues for changing the upper caste mentalities by an appeal to their change of hearts. He argues that if the upper castes could be convinced with an appeal to the principle of ancestral calling, it would be possible for them to believe in the redundancy of untouchability. According to this principle, we are doing different functions as our duties to a village community as ordained by our ancestors. Through an alternative education of upper castes, it would be

possible to convince them that different castes do mere duties to their ancestors. So, there is no low or polluted duty and high or pure duty. All caste functions are duties as per the ancestral calling. Once upper castes are convinced with a notion of duty in every manual labour, it would be possible for them to remove from their minds that some groups do menial labour or polluted functions. All functions would be seen as necessary duties to ancestors. Once upper castes are convinced with this doctrine, they would also undertake street sweeping and so on as Gandhi himself did. That would bring an end to untouchability. So, Satyagraha against untouchability is not necessary. Ambedkar calls Gandhi's doctrine as the one of least resistance.²

Both Ambedkar and Lohia remain dissatisfied with Gandhi's doctrine of least resistance. Both argue that Gandhi, as a matter of principle, denies the relevance of Satyagrah against caste inequalities. If you look at India's history, it is full of such Satyagraha resistance movements against the caste system, so argues Ambedkar. By denying Satyagraha against caste, Gandhi denies the relevance of this history to contemporary egalitarians. Ambedkar argues that Gandhi's call for the abolition of untouchability amounts to a case of limited egalitarianism. Lohia too argues that Gandhi's Satyagraha may be extended to caste system and socialism, unlike Gandhi, may explore the possibility of policy action against caste inequalities, a theme in which Ambedkar is equally concerned. Thus, we find some common threads in their assessment of Gandhism vis-à-vis caste order. Both agree the Gandhism reduces caste into existence of untouchables and nullifies any concerted policy or political action against the caste system. Both agree that it would be necessary to view caste order as power structure and offer an all-rounded critique of caste so that it would be entirely abolished.

For both of them, the abolition of caste order is more important than the abolition of untouchability of the Dalits as Gandhism envisages. Both agree that Gandhism is an egalitarian ideology on the caste question but it has limited utilities in a democratic nation determined to abolish caste inequalities. In fact, Ambedkar, unlike his followers, clearly demarcates three egalitarian ideologies against caste: Gandhism, Marxism and Buddhism. For him as also for Lohia, it would be possible to learn from Gandhism and Marxism while trying to establish an egalitarian ideology, even though lessons from them may have limited applicability in relation to caste order in India. So, I submit, Ambedkar was not anti-Gandhi as made out by his followers today. In a dialectical thinking, there are no pro- or anti- Gandhi positions.³

Both give credit to Gandhi for discovering Satyagraha as a means of people's struggle against injustice and for popularising Satyagraha at a pan-Indian level. Lohia assumes that due to Gandhi, it would be now possible to place Satyagraha against the caste system, even though Gandhi might have placed "the change of heart" doctrine in relation to caste or property disputes.⁴ For, due to Gandhi, Satyagraha is now etched on people's memory at a national level. People would never forget its relevance in their own social and political struggles. There is no blind anti-Gandhism in Ambedkar as made out by his followers today, even though he is sharply critical of Gandhism.

Ambedkar and caste as a system of graded inequalities

Let us focus on Ambedkar's programme of the annihilation of caste as a prelude to our discussion of Lohia's plea for the destruction of caste order. Ambedkar argues clearly: Gandhism has a weak understanding of caste inequalities and moreover has a weaker understanding of solutions to caste order. We have seen the latter aspect and now shall examine the former aspect. Gandhi identifies untouchability of the Dalits as a major problem in the caste order. He is for the abolition of untouchability, even though he prescribes no political action. But, he forgets that untouchability is not simply limited to the Dalit's social experience. Untouchability is also the experience of the so-called touchable castes and all women across caste order. By simply ignoring this simple point, Gandhi misses the essence of the caste system which consists of grades of untouchability against several human beings, not simply Dalits. Caste is defined by untouchability practised within "touchable" castes and against untouchable castes rather than by the position of untouchables as Gandhi imagines. One of the broadest definitions of the caste system as a system of graded inequalities is thus found in Ambedkar. In comparison, the Gandhian conception of caste pales into romantic narrow mindedness. Let us elaborate this feature of caste as captured by Ambedkar briefly.⁵

Caste is simply not a system of inequalities between castes of purity and pollution. Such a neat division of labour is not there in the caste system. There are grades of pollution, followed by rules of precedence in matters of education, religion, commensalism, marriage, economy and so on. Such rules of precedence exclude not merely Dalits from various sectors of human life. They also exclude Sudras, Vaisyas, non-Vedic Brahmins as well as all women across caste divisions. Caste is thus a hierarchy of grades/ranks of people subdivided by the different rules of precedence in matters governing human life, where the Vedic Brahmin male occupies the top of hierarchy with Dalits occupying its bottom. Let us see how rules of precedence occur in education life under the caste order. Vedas and Puranas were seen as two different sources of knowledge. Vedic Brahmins occupied superior status over Puranic Brahmins as the Vedic knowledge preceded Puranic knowledge. Brahmin male occupied superior status over Brahmin women in matters of knowledge. Women of any caste and all non-Brahmin males were excluded from education system by caste practices.

Violation of such rules by any group invited proportionate physical punishment. Such punishment rules varied from region to region. If you recall, Ambedkar's submission against Gandhi is that the latter ignores the prevalence of untouchability among "touchable" castes. Even non-Vedic Brahmins and all Brahmin women are not supposed to know the Vedas. The Vedas must be kept away from all these groups. Forms of untouchability are practised across all "touchable" castes. Even, untouchables are divided by rules of precedence. Malas think that they are superior to Madigas in Andhra Pradesh and assume that the latter are untouchables. Not merely in education but also in all other spheres of life, such rules of precedence prevail, thus creating a variety of untouchability strata across caste order. That is why Gandhi's call for the abolition of untouchability of untouchable castes or Dalits is a weak solution, further weakened by his plea for a change of hearts of the upper castes. Thus, Ambedkar pleads that all round Satyagraha must be conducted to destroy the essence of caste which lies in varieties of untouchability created by the social system. We shall leave Ambedkar here. It should be enough to indicate how Ambedkar examines caste as a hierarchy of power.

III

Lohia and the moral order of the caste

As I said before, Lohia does not explore how caste is organised as a graded hierarchy. I am not aware if Lohia knows Ambedkar's richer analysis. Most probably, unwittingly, he examines what is left out by Ambedkar. Why the caste order manages to survive in the midst of resistance against caste and foreign conquests? This is a most important question for Lohia, "Castes have endured over thousands of years".⁶ He goes on to explore how caste creates legitimisation processes so that lower castes feel that they are indeed lower, and so on. He goes on to explore how caste creates insurance or social security for which people do not have to pay a premium. How castes produce a split personality in average Hindus without a stable and sincere voice on anything? How castes disunite and divide masses who witnessed several foreign conquests by tiny armies whereas vast masses remained passive? No foreign conquests propelled them for mass action due to caste divisions. For, he continuously looks for mobilisation of people for socialist action in the midst of passivity of masses imposed by caste or in the midst of social security given by caste? Can socialists learn from some positive features by destroying the negative features of the caste system? What strategy they ought to have to do so? What policy actions are possible under socialism?

The Provision for Social Security

To cite Lohia: "Caste is presumably the world's largest insurance for which one does not pay a formal or regular premium. Solidarity is always there when everything else fails".⁷ Caste provides for social solidarity in matters of child-bearing, marriage, funeral obsequies, feasts and other rituals. Men belonging to the same caste assist each other at these decisive hours of needs. But Lohia does not fail to notice that caste-based security for which we may not have to pay any premium for insurance protection does also practice "excluding men of other castes" who are reduced to be in the periphery of such social security system. This system of insurance without any cost or premium makes the system more resilient and durable in the eyes of its members only. But it practices segregation in providing social security to needy people from other castes.

I remember one incident from Aska, a small town in Orissa. One Komati (trader) family was not able to arrange their daughter in wedding due to financial difficulties of the family. The Komati Pentha arranged money for her marriage and finally arranged a boy for her too. She was "happily" married off after sometime. Such solidarity is found in the caste associations throughout India. Brahmin Associations give fellowship to the poor Brahmin students in the schools. Kamma Sangam do similar things. Do we ever come across beggars among Komatis or Jat Sikhs? The Langar houses or Penthas take care of such people. Such activities provide legitimacy and strength to caste order. Caste continues to survive despite many crisis points posed by modernization. This partly explains why caste has survived even the foreign conquests led by Muslims and Christians who came to India with egalitarian ideologies but got adjusted with caste order. And in fact, due to a modernization drive, caste has managed to survive in urban areas by getting organised as associations offering many kinds of assistance at times of financial crisis. The more a caste group has money, the more it is organised with association offices and schemes of assistance for needy members of its own caste. To use a more fashionable term, I would say that caste provides for social capital networks. But such social capital networks are restricted within a particular caste stratum.⁸ Can socialism learn from this community network to weaken caste order instead of relying on the state power to do so as for at present? I assume Lohia is interested in inferring such a question from his

investigation into a caste system, though I must confess I have not been able to see such an explicit query asked by him. Otherwise, why should be a socialist leader interested in telling us about this networking aspect of caste? Lohia does not ask such a sharp question, as I am afraid, he purely relies on the state/party model of socialism to overcome barriers of caste system while offering social security. His model of solution converges with that of Nehruvian liberals and communist parties, even though the way he examines caste system frontally his analysis differs from them. Lohia does not share what he calls their “wordy opposition” to caste, which will be examined in the last section of the paper.

A system of moral subordination

Another aspect of the caste system is the way it survives with the support from lower castes. The upper castes do not have to dominate them with the rule of the gun. Lower castes justify their subordination by discovering folklore of their kind and offer a justification of their own subordination through a moral discourse innovated by themselves rather than by upper castes. Lower castes have legends and myths that justify their lowly situation and transform it into a symbol of sacrifice and lustre. Lohia gives an illustration from fisherfolk's life. The Kaivarts (fisher-folk caste) who presumably number more than one crore population tell stories about their mythical ancestors, who were simple, un-greedy, brave and generous and who lost everything to other ancestors of Kshatriyas and other high castes because of their greater greed and deceit. A current lot of misery is attributed to the unending succession of sacrificial acts for the sake of high principles. This sacrifice is seen not as an active principle that seeks change but as a passive submission to the caste order. This sort of mythical sacrifices is widespread among the lower castes. They secure their subordination.⁹

Weakens nation

Lohia argues that it is widely believed that foreigners could invade and conquer India due to our internal quarrels and intrigues. This is plain misreading India's history. The single most cause is caste system which produced imbecility and passivity among masses who were hardly interested in nation's tragedies. Caste is the single most reason why national feeling, national solidarity and action preventing national tragedies could not develop. These forms of national consciousness still do not develop. This is reminiscent of Ambedkar's idea: “castes are anti-national”.¹⁰ Like Ambedkar, Lohia too argues that unless caste is destroyed new India could not revive. India would remain weak, not due to intrigues but due to caste inequalities. If political parties play with caste cards in electoral democracy, the nation would remain dormant and docile. India would not be seen as a developed nation. So in Lohia's estimate caste and nation do have a negative correlation. If one remains strong, the other remains weak. If caste remains strong, people's languages, their housing and general styles of living will remain undeveloped and their mind will have imbecility due to inferiority complexes instilled in them over thousand years.¹¹ A vibrant India cannot be born in such situations. So the destruction of caste is more important for nation-building.

A split personality among Hindus

Caste induces Hindus to commit biggest hypocrisies. Hindus like all other religious people tell lies to others. What is, however, unique about Hindus is they lie themselves. A Hindu tells lies to him as well as others and feels most comfortable with its success. A Hindu mind, due to caste, is a bundle of contradictions. Unless caste is destroyed in belief and practice, a Hindu mind will no way seek to develop in him/her a consistent character and sincere moral personality.

There is a very interesting discussion between Lohia and Gandhi. After Lohia returned from Germany, he met Gandhi. Gandhi called him a very brave man. Lohia responded by saying that the tiger is also brave. Gandhi called him a learned man. Lohia laughed it away, by saying that a lawyer who enjoys financial benefits as a result of people's growing conflicts is also learned, man. Then, Gandhi concluded that Lohia had "Sheel", which can best be translated as "continuity in character". Lohia remained silence.¹²

Lohia assumes that once we believe in caste moralities, our personalities will remain retarded and under-grown. Thus, on my interpretation of his writings, Lohia thinks that an average Hindu mind (I would extend this idea to average caste conscious Muslims and Christians) may be brave or may be learned. But in order to have continuity in character, he must believe in a caste-free society, must prove that s/he is committed to the destruction of caste in practice. That means s/he must have social networks (friendship, trusts) across caste order. Any restriction of this will be hypocritical. Lohia gives two more examples from public life. He gives the cases of the PM and the President. The PM once over a week told the press that he would resign as nobody listened to him, even though people respected him. Next day, he would continue to hold the post. Next day, again, he would threaten to resign and next moment, he would withdraw. Thus, the PM would indicate how he lacked "Sheel". The President was still worse. He was part of the constitutional post which believed in prohibition but he was also the President of the Calcutta Club, founded by Indian bourgeoisie, where wines flowed every evening. A rich Tanti (a weaver caste) wanted to join as a member but was refused as he was not from the families of "the Tatas and Birlas".¹³ And the President was still the chief patron of the Club, even after a weaver from the upper class was refused its membership. Neither the President nor the Prime Minister did even blink that whatever they were doing was full of contradictions. Such imbecility of mind occurs because of the lack of commitment to a caste-free society. Lohia somehow believed that continuity in character can arise only if we the Hindus (or even non-Hindus) are committed to the destruction of caste order in belief and social practice.

This theme remained dear to his writings and personality throughout his life. Let us devote time to this issue which was closer to his heart. He comes back to this theme in several of his writings. Lohia's argument about an average Hindu personality believing in caste order as a bundle of contradictions was anticipated by D D Kosambi, the Marxist historian. Kosambi argues that the average Hindu is like a python which assimilates contradictions, without attempting to resolve them. Caste order is indeed based on this kind of assimilation, without any attempt to resolve their contradictions. Contradictions surface and resurface, without any attempt to resolve them. Contradictions between Vedic Brahmin and non-Vedic Brahmin, the contradiction between Brahmin male and Brahmin female, the contradiction between each Sudra caste trying to claim purity against pollution of other Sudra castes, a contradiction within Dalit castes and contradiction between Dalits and non-Dalits. If we take the case of the Lord Shiva's entourage, it will be very clear what Kosambi means. Let us examine closely what constitutes Shiva's entourage. In this entourage, we have different elements who are mutually opposed to each other. We have a bull, a cobra, an elephant god with a rat in His convoy. We have Parvathi with a lion in Her convoy. Quite a few of these characters induce us to believe in a set of contradictions that our caste minds assimilate, without any attempt to resolve them. If we go deeper, you may find that caste order evolved by subjugating and assimilating different tribes with their different cults like snake cult, Basava (bull) cult, elephant cult and so on, thus produced an entourage of Shiva. In the process of preserving their cults, the tribes got assimilated into caste-based occupations and a Hindu pantheon was established.¹⁴ Sastras and Puranas began justifying this caste order and prescribed rules of precedence for different people

differently, a point we have already seen from Ambedkar. Caste and Hinduism are essentially about assimilating contradictions without any attempt to resolve them. I do not wish to equate Hinduism with caste order. But there is a caste core of the Hindu social order which is also a core of the converts from Hinduism to Islam and Christianity in post-Independent India.¹⁵

Lohia argues that an average Hindu personality is hypocritical. Like any other foreigner, he tells lies to others. But he is more than this. He also lies himself.¹⁶ Lohia believes that this personality trait is the product of caste order. If I take this as a working hypothesis, I find his argument very interesting. Lohia gives some more examples from marriage. For example, a Telugu Brahmin boy may marry a Kannada Brahmin girl and may claim that their marriage is “pan- Indian”. According to Lohia, such a marriage is actually a pan-Brahmin marriage rather than pan-Indian marriage. This is a hypocritical claim. Such hypocrisies are rampant in a caste society. Similarly, an Oriya Khandayata gets married with an Oriya Chasa and calls this inter-caste marriage. This is a marriage within “touchable” castes and can hardly be called as inter-caste. We can probably think of our contemporary examples. Politically, a Mala may claim that he is a Dalit but does not hesitate to ex-communicate Madigas and their assertions for self-identity, thus debunking his entire claim for a Dalit identity. Similarly, Madigas may perpetuate discrimination against Erukulas and Erukulas against Chenchus. Such hypocrisy – from social or political life - is plenty in caste order spreading from its top to bottom. These are all cases of a split personality of a person or a group owing to the peculiarity of caste contradictions whose resolution is not sought by them.

Classes Oscillate as Caste: Reverse Appropriation?

In a way reminiscent of Gramsci’s model of reverse appropriation, Lohia suggests that Western classes also oscillate towards caste order, even though caste order is uniquely Indian. Gramsci argues that European ruling classes, after colonial experiences, readopt caste’s segregated forms to counter working class aspirations for equality. Gramsci hints that the Western ruling classes reinvent even caste-like language against class struggle. Caste-like rigidities, privileges, imbecilities and excommunication exist in German, American and Soviet societies.¹⁷ Similarities exist between castes and classes in certain matters. Faced with class struggle since 1848 till 1990 (the period of ‘transformism’), classes shut the door against the lower order and develop rigid and exclusive forms. After 1848, the moment of the spectre of communism, the ruling classes were afraid of assimilating ‘new elements’, so argues Gramsci. (Dainotto, 2013: 84) Gramsci argues that the concept of class alone cannot explain this history. Marxists need to use caste in relation to class in those periods of crisis of hegemony when ruling classes shut the door against the subaltern’s upward mobility. (Dainotto, Ibid: 85) Lohia suggests that Europe experienced two such moments of appropriation of caste in the class system: the moment of fascism in Germany and the moment of communism in Russia. Despite huge differences between them, despite their economic antagonism, both these currents are similarly motivated. In these formations, classes oscillate as a caste-like system.

Lohia argues that caste-like response of the class system in Europe is temporary or conjectural. It is essentially a strategy to counter ‘the threat of internal disruption’ of class struggle. Lohia continues, “When this struggle amongst classes in Germany became unbearable and the German society was threatened with internal disruption, the national socialist movement essayed to fix up the different classes into castes with their proportionate and fixed incomes and well-defined status. It showed them that their various orders were so co-ordinated as to yield a meaning and purpose of life no matter that this purpose had no enduring or religious quality and was narrowly national. It was essentially a caste movement.” (Lohia, vol 2: 147)

So also in Russia, communists tried to abolish classes by creating castes. The groups of toilers were fixed up in their status and incomes. It was not possible for them to struggle for changes. Similarly, untouchability was created in correction or concentration camps in Russia. They nearly constituted India's untouchable population. They were 10% of the Russian population. They rendered cheap labour for economic reconstruction as in the case of India's Sudra and Dalit labour. Caste-like institutions emerged in Russia. (Lohia, Vol 2: 149)

Caste is essentially 'immobile' class as Lohia suggests. His formulation is akin to what Ambedkar calls caste as 'enclosed' class system. Lohia continues, when Western ruling classes develop enclosures against the initiatives of subaltern strata for equality in the market, production, language, culture and politics, caste-like structures re-appear in all these spheres. Lohia recounts a form of enclosure (racial) in the market place in the USA. For example, like India's untouchable castes, the American black people live in ghettos and cannot visit hotels "all-white" cafeteria in Jackson in the Mississippi state in 1964. He was blocked at the entrance by the owner, ably assisted by the police, under "the rules of privacy". By merely having purchasing power is not enough in such situations. A culture of segregation, practised by one's colour or birth, exists everywhere.¹⁸ Caste-like barriers are created by people in liberal democratic class societies, even though people may believe in equality for everybody. In such situations, classes oscillate towards castes. So a struggle against caste barriers is simultaneously a struggle against class inequalities. There is, however, a subtle difference. In class struggle, socialism is concerned with equality or distribution of resources, whereas socialism is concerned with justice or dignity of each human being in all anti-caste resistance.¹⁹ But class struggle must oscillate towards caste struggle as classes veer towards caste system. Otherwise, we may end up in socialism as existed in the then Soviet Union, without any concern for justice, so argues Lohia. Thus anti-caste movements concerned with justice issues are basically international by nature and are not just India-centred.

If we recall, there was a huge debate on this issue in India in 2001. The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Tolerance (WCAR), was being organised by the United Nations in Durban in 2001 when the NDA government was in power. Both the national government and the Sarkari intellectuals did not want to internationalise the caste question and refused to participate in the WCAR in 2001.²⁰ They claimed that caste is not same as race and tried to argue that caste is uniquely an Indian phenomenon and thereby should be delinked from the concerns of international black people's movements.²¹ Even if the history of caste is not the same as that of race, a point made by Ambedkar against Tamil Dalit intellectuals, Lohia would have argued that the Sarkari intellectuals tried to prevent India's anti-caste movements to learn concerns of justice raised by Black movements.

If they have similar concerns of justice – opposing forms of segregation on the grounds of human dignity, then such issues are international rather than national. They have ample scope to learn about moral, political, ideological doctrines of justice from each other. Lohia argues that caste question is concerned with justice, whereas class question is concerned with equality. So a struggle for equality must be interlinked with a struggle for justice if democratic socialism must avoid the disastrous path of Soviet socialism under the Bolshevik party which was singularly concerned with "class". Incidentally, Ambedkar raises a similar concern against Marxism, for the latter is singularly concerned with equality by ignoring liberty and justice. Movements for justice must be internationalised along with movements for equality. Internal oscillation must take place in between these two social movements and must provide feedback to each other.

IV

Reconstructing Fables:

It goes to the credit of Lohia's method of immediacy to have read internal caste contradiction in fables or myths. After discussing different aspects of 'history' or philosophy of caste, let us now pay attention to Lohia's engagement with fables of Brahminism/Jativad. Once again, his analytical protocols resemble that of Gramsci's analysis of religion, folklore and myths. It cannot be explored here as to how Gramsci examines internal contradiction in myths and religion. Of many levels of contradiction in religion, two most important ones are as follows: the religion of the people vs religion of the intellectual, left-wing Catholic action vs right-wing Catholic action, and so on.²² Lohia identifies similar contradiction internal to the Brahminical order.

As stated above, immanent criticism à la Gramsci must pay attention to inheritances of a tradition subject to its critical evaluation. Lohia follows these protocols in his critical evaluation of fables of Brahminism: Vashishtha tradition vs. Valmiki tradition. In my view, Lohia's argument is reminiscent of Gandhi's position in the Gandhi-Ambedkar's debate in 1936. In this famous debate, Ambedkar lampooned all Smritis and Sastras and also all Saints for reinforcing inequalities in Hinduism. But Gandhi disagreed with Ambedkar's negative thinking about Hinduism. According to him, there are a few progressive Saints who talk against untouchability and preach equality in Hinduism. In the 1950s, however, Ambedkar revised his thinking. Of the 130 odd Smritis, there are however two Smritis (including Manusmriti) that recognise women's right to ancestral property – immovable and movable. Ambedkar criticises Hindu conservatives for burying these insights in their traditional mindsets. Similarly, Ambedkar argues that the Hindu text Upanishads defend social equality, an argument present in his text 'Annihilation of Caste' when he was in a debate with Gandhi. But in his debate with Gandhi, he dismisses the internal tensions within Hinduism. However, he corrects his transcendental criticism of Hinduism by recognising internal tensions within Hinduism while piloting Hindu code bill.²³ However, like Gandhi, Lohia's firmly anchors himself with the immanent criticism of Brahminism/Hinduism.

Lohia argues that are two contradictory narratives in caste system reflected in the formation of Brahminism. All Brahmins are not pro-caste intellectuals. Look at the fables of Vashishtha and Viswamitra, both being Brahmins. While Vashishtha was pro-caste intellectual, Viswamitra represented anti-caste spirit. The latter represented the Valmiki tradition of social fraternity across caste barriers. Lohia gives an interesting interpretation of the fable of Sambuka from a Sudra caste. Under an oath to the guru Vashishtha, the King Ram punished Sambuka for violating the Dvija monopoly of scriptures at the behest of the guru Vashishtha. In the opposite side, Valmiki, the author of Ramayana, represents a liberal tradition in India. He was the founder and inmate of heterodox hermitage/Ashram. Everybody was allowed inside his hermitage irrespective of caste. Vishvamitra, the author of Gayatri Mantra, was highly revolutionary and initiated people irrespective of caste into Gayatri Mantra.

Lohia does not condone Ram's act but calls Ram an example of the world's greatest limited personality, always introspective with regrets and obliging the guru/Praja dharma. Lohia argues that this is "one the four bad acts of Ram, the world's greatest man in the sphere of the limited personality, the other three being, the banishment of Sita, the killing of Bali from a position of concealment, incitement to Lakshman to cut off the nose of Shrupanakha, the sister of Ravan." (Lohia, vol. 2: 269)

On the positive side, the fable of Ram represents introspective reasoning associated with a limited personality. Despite drawbacks, the mythology of Ram epitomises the virtues of introspective reasoning. Lohia offers a complex interpretation of the bad acts of Ram. He discovers multiple narratives of bad and good values in each 'bad act' of Ram. While the banishment of Sita was a 'bad act', the King was also following a Praja dharma. Similarly, in the killing of Bali from a position of concealment, the Lord was also following a 'limited war' with Bali. He avoided an open war which might have killed thousands in Bali's Army and saved the innocent elements. Thus, there is an introspective reasoning associated with each 'bad' act of Ram: the silent surrender to a higher Dharma/Ideal. Saving innocent lives, obliging a Guru tradition and following a Praja Dharma are most important ideals for Lord Ram. These moral doctrines of even 'bad acts' of Ram are very significant for a modern civilisation to learn and adopt today. Lohia tries to show that Gandhi did adopt these features to some extent.

Extending his discussion of fables, Lohia (2012: 269-288) suggests that the mythologies of Krishna and Siva represent different human values. Krishna represents the spirit of a mass mobiliser, an exuberant personality. But Siva represents the spirit of universal patience or non-dimensional mind. Gandhi represents a synthesis of introspective reasoning, mass mobilising capacity and universal patience. Lohia implies that mass leaders must represent these three virtues and as far as possible must synthesise them in their personalities. Only then, it would be possible to lead mass movements. Thus, Lohia draws significant lessons from mythologies for a contemporary social and political movement. These three values are properties of Sheel (character) of a mass leader. For Lohia, character building of masses and leaders is a very important historical task of a socialist movement which must aim at spiritual transformation as well, while transforming society materially. To do so, we must also look at fables or mythologies (not simply history) by following a method of immediacy.

Lohia was wary of anti-caste movements getting reduced to attack Brahmins failing to notice that there are internal tensions within Brahminism. While praising Dravid Kazhagam leader Periyar for raising an anti-caste movement, he advised him to focus more on criticism of Brahmin orthodoxies beginning from Vashishtha tradition rather than attack individual Brahmins. For him, the criticism of evil act is more important than criticism of evil doer. The personal violence of any kind – spiritual or physical – must be abjured by an egalitarian movement. Moreover, the act of social movement must transform self rather than the Other only. No self-transformation is possible by criticising the evil doer. For, the evil doer would be seen as outsider of a social movement and the insiders would gradually acquire a sacred mind like Vashishtha. This is a new orthodoxy which would block spiritual transformation of a social movement. A Vashishtha-like mind is harmful in a social movement that aims to destroy caste system/Brahminism. The idea of a sacred mind (or Magi mind) in any liberation movement must be resisted at any cost, for it ultimately destroys the critics of caste order. In a sense, Lohia anticipates Althusser's criticism of the Communist movement which claimed: "the Party is always right". The Communist mind becomes sacred and is above criticism whereas the Other is subject to a rigorous criticism. The Communist Party becomes a Vashishtha or caste leader. So, Lohia concludes that Vashishtha mindset is extremely harmful in anti-caste movements.

What is to be done: Three forms of Opposition?

Lohia argues that there are three kinds of opposition to caste order. First, there are ones who believe in the wordy opposition to caste-like Nehruvian liberals, the communists and the Praja Socialist Party. Second, there are those who believe in partial opposition to caste by the Sudras like the DK politics in South during his time or Yadava politics of the North during our time. Third, there are those who believe in a wholesale opposition to caste order. Lohia prefers the third alternative as the first two groups are basically hypocrites. True to his character (Sheel), he prefers a broad-based opposition to caste involving Dalits, Sudras, Muslims and women who are all victims of caste-based hypocritical politics. Here, he disagrees with Ambedkar's strategy of relying on Dalits only. Let me elaborate this aspect now.

Wordy Opposition

First, Lohia argues, "The wordy opposition to caste is the loudest in respect of such generalised condemnation of caste as it leaves the existing structure almost intact".²⁴ Raise everybody economically, this thesis claims. It also argues the caste denies equality of opportunities. So to solve this problem of denial, we must ensure equality of opportunity to everybody irrespective of caste. Communists, the PSP and Nehruvian Congress stand for this thesis. Any other social and political attempt to do away the caste inequalities is condemned as "casteist". As a result, economic equality for Dalits and Sudras are seen as the most important. But this thesis forgets that the policy of equal opportunity in economic sphere has helped the upper caste people entrenched into higher positions. Only the most talented one from among the Sudras and Dalits could be absorbed in the economic sector.

This economic strategy also leaves behind caste traditions in marriage and other aspects of life intact. By condemning anti-caste efforts of all other forces by non-economic means it fails to see how its economic strategy does not help elevate lower castes into economically equal to upper castes. It has fostered caste-based inequalities in the job sector. As a result, 80% of jobs are still cornered by the upper castes who account for 20% of the population in India. To quote him, "when more than 4/5th of nation's vital leadership is traditionally selected from among 1/5th of its population, a state of atrophy is bound to ensue".²⁵

Partial Elevation

Secondly, the wordy war on caste is evenly matched by the second empty struggle against caste led by select Sudra groups. Among Sudras, certain castes are numerically powerful. The age of adult franchise has placed power in their hands. The Reddys, Mudaliars, Marathas, Yadavas or Ahirs, along with Brahmins and Kshatriyas, are nearly 25% of the population. They still leave out 3/4th of the population. There are three problems in sectional elevation. First, sectional elevation brings about some changes within the caste system but leaves the basis of castes unaltered. Second, still worse, sectional elevation is dangerous in another way. Those among the lower castes who rise to high positions tend to assimilate themselves to the existing high-castes. In this process, they appropriate baser qualities of the high castes. Third, it also generates bitter caste jealousies and intrigues. Caste divisions do not vanish at all. Caste distinctions reappear. Women are segregated and sacred threads reappear among the not-Dwijias.²⁶

Holistic Elevation or Elevation of All

Finally, a true struggle against caste is concerned with an elevation of all rather than one or the other section of lower castes. This struggle aims to pitchfork the five downgraded groups such as women, Sudras, Dalits, backward caste Muslims and Adivasis, into positions of leadership, irrespective of their merit as it stands today. A doctrine of preferential opportunity in employment must be followed up along with a social and political programme against the caste system. Eighty percent of jobs in the leadership of political parties, national economy and government service should be reserved for 3/4th of our population. However, Lohia thinks that there should be a distinction between equal opportunity in education and preferential opportunity in employment. No child must be preferred or prevented by a policy while pursuing education. Discrimination should be exercised only in the case of government jobs. Educated Dwijas should try their luck in other fields. To end caste, social measures like mixed dinners, and inter-caste marriages and economic measures like “land to the tiller” from among the lower castes must be encouraged. Women’s issues like fetching drinking water from distant areas or building of lavatories for women in rural areas must be resolved, apart from the distribution of property to press for women’s rights. Discussions, plays, and fairs should be organised.²⁷ Even, in government jobs, there should be reservation for those who marry outside their caste. This is a sure way of breaking caste barriers. The socialists must make all efforts towards the destruction of caste order among Hindus and non-Hindus.

In retrospect, we must distinguish Lohia’s critique from those followers of Lohia who surrendered his manifold criticism of caste into the sectional politics of Sudras in North India through the Samajwadi Party of Mulayam Singh Yadav and the Rashtriya Janata Dal of Laloo Prasad Yadav. Lohia’s attempts in characterising such partial elevation of Sudras in South India should not be forgotten. He criticises the Sudra politics in South for being concerned with “partial elevation” of Sudras, for alienating itself from Dalits, women, backward Muslims and Adivasis and for not showing interest in carrying out the agenda of destruction of the caste system. While Lohia’s critique of caste must be distinguished from his followers in the electoral field today, his alternative model merely relies on the state action for equality and justice.

There are two major difficulties in accepting Lohia’s model of socialism. First, there could be an anomaly in his claim that equal opportunity in education must be followed, whereas preferential treatment in employment is to be adopted. As Ambedkar argues, caste has denied education to many social groups: women, Sudras, Dalits and Adivasis. If there is no preferential policy protecting education for these groups, it would not be possible for spreading education among common people. So any anti-caste measure must aim at affirmative policy on education, for education alone can develop initial capacities of subaltern strata that were historically denied education by the caste system. Lohia’s argument for equal opportunity in modern education may reproduce educational inequalities caste-wise.

Second, he believes in putting pressure on the state for egalitarian policies through civil liberties movements. So his model of socialism could be called as state socialism. His Chaturkhamba model of state ultimately gets one-sided in its emphasis for neglecting the community organisation of resources that may also weaken caste communities and help in the emergence of territorial communities with sharing of specific resources at each territorial level. By sharing resources at each territory from below to a summit of the pyramid, one can simultaneously retain powers of communities and also push them beyond caste order, without exclusively relying on the state action as Lohia proposes. In Lohia’s state socialism, the state is all powerful and communities have no role to play in breaking barriers of caste order. Though his model state is a democratic state, the state is still the motor of social change. This is a theme

of Jayaprakash's critique of state-centered socialism through his concept of Lokniti, which socialists may have to pay attention in order to explore if these thinkers may complement each other in the withering away of caste order in future India.²⁸

(The present paper is a revised and enlarged version of my essay published in *mySOCIETY*, Vol. I-IV, Nos. 1-4, 2008-09.)

NOTES

¹ In this passage, Lohia is inaccurate in two different senses. First, what he means to say is different: we must oppose evil while befriending the evil doer. For, he argues that an 'active Indian mind' is opposed to 'the evil alone'. Second, he is also inaccurate in another sense. The caste mind of Vashishtha (the ancient Sage of India from Hindu tradition), is also a sacred mind as Lohia argues consistently. So to attribute India's sacred mind to a borrowed mentality or Magi mind (the ancient Sage of Central Asia from Hebrew tradition) from Europe/Central Asia is not very accurate. A caste mind which cannot be seen as a borrowed mentality presents itself as sacred. These inconsistent formulations do not take away Lohia's creative imagination in exploring inner contradictions in Indian history/fables. As opposed to the caste/sacred minds, the Valmiki/Vishvamitra tradition represents a heterodox liberal tradition in India. We shall return to this theme later in the text.

² B R Ambedkar, "An Anti-Untouchability Agenda", in V Rodrigues (ed.), **The Essentials Writings of B R Ambedkar**, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002.

³ Ambedkar would have not disagreed with Lohia that he is not anti- or pro-Gandhi. See R M Lohia, **Marx, Gandhi and Socialism**, Rammanohar Lohia Samata Vidyalaya Nyasa, Hyderabad, Second Edition, 1978, p. 364.

⁴ Ibid, pp. 157-158.

⁵ B R Ambedkar, "Annihilation of Caste", and "Reply to the Mahatma", in V Rodrigues (ed.), **op. cit.**, 2002, pp. 263-320.

⁶ R M Lohia, **The Caste System**, Rammanohar Lohia Samata Vidyalaya Nyasa, Hyderabad, 1964, p. 81.

⁷ R M Lohia, **op. cit.**, n.5, p. 80.

⁸ Hans Blomkvist, "Traditional communities, Caste and Democracy: The Indian Mystery", Paul Dekker and Eric M Uslaner (eds.), **Social Capital and Participation in Everyday Life**, Routledge, London, 2001.

⁹ R M Lohia, **op. cit.**, n.5, p. 84.

¹⁰ B R Ambedkar, **Constitutional Assembly Debates**, Volume X-XII, 25 November 1949, p. 980.

¹¹ R M Lohia, **op. cit.**, n.5, pp. 83-84.

¹² Harris Wofford Jr., “About Lohia”, **Lohia and American Meet 1951 & 1964**, B R Pub, Delhi, 2002, p. V

¹³ R M Lohia, **op. cit.**, n.5, pp. 132-134.

¹⁴ D D Kosambi, **The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline**, Vikas Pub., Delhi, 1990, pp. 169-171.

¹⁵ Thus it is possible for all non-Hindus (including atheists) to believe in caste just as it is possible for a reformist Hindu to reject caste order. For a long time, Ambedkar thought that as a Hindu it should be possible for him to rejuvenate Hinduism by abolishing caste order internally. Cf. Ambedkar, **op. cit.** n. 4. Gandhi probably did not understand caste order in details and yet he did not believe in casteism. Ambedkar rightly calls Gandhism stand Marxism as egalitarian ideologies. According to him, there are serious inadequacies in these ideologies in their engagement with caste system.

¹⁶ See R M Lohia, “Hinduism”, in his **Fragments of a World Mind**, Maitrayani, Calcutta, (n.d.), pp. 112-125.

¹⁷ R M Lohia, **Wheel of History**, B R Pub., Delhi, 1955, pp. 33-34.

¹⁸ R M Lohia: “I make it perfectly clear. I am not trying something foul in American life. ... Such foul spots exist everywhere – also in India.” (**op. cit.**, n. 10, p. 204)

¹⁹ R M Lohia, **Wheel of History**, **op. cit.**, p. 37.

²⁰ A Pinto, “UN Conference against Racism: Is Caste Race?”, **Economic and Political Weekly**, July 28, 2001.

²¹ A Betteile, “Race and Caste”, Opinion Page, **The Hindu**, 10 March 2001.

²² John Fulton, “Religion and Politics in Gramsci: An Introduction,” **Sociological Analysis** 48 (3), 1987:197–216.

²³ In fact, Ambedkar’s analysis of mythologies in his paper on “The Riddle of Ram and Krishna” is an exemplar of transcendental criticism of Hinduism. But the text (posthumously published in 1987) was written prior to 1948. By 1950, however, in his dialogue with Hindu women, he shifted his focus from a transcendental to immanent criticism of Hinduism. I have explored Ambedkar’s substantive shifts in my paper on Ambedkar’s Theory of Democracy (see my blog in www.academia.edu). But it is necessary to explore its significance in terms of an epistemology.

²⁴ R M Lohia, **op. cit.**, n. 5, p. 95.

²⁵ **Ibid**, p. 97.

²⁶ **Ibid**, p. 101.

²⁷ R M Lohia, **op. cit.**, n. 5, pp. 136-137.

²⁸ I would like to propose an eclectic approach to socialism rather than choose the side of state socialism of Lohia/Ambedkar or communitarian socialism of Jayprakash and others. An alternative construction, however, may need to be worked out.

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